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# ***PART-TIME FARMING***



**FARMERS'  
BULLETIN  
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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**W**HEN WORLD WAR II is over it is probable that many veterans will turn to farming. There they will hope to find economic security and a satisfactory way of life. Many war workers whose war jobs will end when peace comes may want to farm, too, and some of them will want to combine farming with other jobs. Veterans who are partially disabled and retired war workers may want to supplement their pensions or their social security benefits with incomes from small farms.

Part-time farming is sometimes confused with an attempt to make a living completely from a farm that is too small to provide either full employment or an adequate income. It should be thoroughly understood by those who seek to try it that part-time farming means that the family lives on a farm but derives its income from two sources—from the farm and from work off the farm.

This bulletin has been written as a guide for those who are looking for part-time farms. It should be helpful to young men now in military service who are looking forward to agricultural pursuits when they return to civilian life. The bulletin will also be of use to county extension agents, farm security supervisors, vocational agriculture teachers, and other local leaders to whom these young people will turn for guidance.

# PART-TIME FARMING

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### THERE ARE MANY PART-TIME FARMERS

**PART-TIME FARMING** is a way of life in which the family lives on a small farm, but draws its income from two or more sources, one of which is the farm. The other may be a job in industry, or a profession, or work on other farms in the community. In some cases the outside income is from investments or a pension.

Many people work full time in a city but live in the country, perhaps doing a little gardening and keeping a few chickens. These people are more properly called rural residents than part-time farmers, but there is no sharp line of distinction between the two.

There were more than 900,000 farmers in the United States in 1939 who worked more than 100 days each off their own farms. Thousands of other farmers supplemented their farm income by a few days of work elsewhere.

### DECISIONS TO BE MADE

Before a man decides to become a part-time farmer he should think about and decide upon several things. Some of these are: How much income is needed to support the family? How much of this income can he expect to make from a farm and how much from the outside job? How much time will he and his family be able to give to the farm? At what seasons of the year will this time be available? What crops shall be raised and what livestock kept? How much land will be needed?

Is there a chance for steady work within reach of the part-time farm he has in mind? Do all members of the family realize what they will have to do to succeed? What are the advantages of part-time farming? What are the disadvantages? The realistic approach of the prospective farmer to these questions and the soundness of the answers he works out will have much to do with his chances of success.

### KINDS OF SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT

If a person wants to use his spare time that way he will probably have enough time to raise the garden and the chickens to supply

nearly all of his family needs for vegetables, fruits, eggs, and fryers. With some help from the family he might also be able to care for a cow. This is true of almost any kind of employment except heavy manual labor that leaves him physically exhausted at the end of the day.

But to produce on a larger scale, and get a cash income from the farm, some kind of employment is needed that will either allow considerable spare time every day or that has seasonal slack periods that will come at a time when the farm requires attention.

Rural mail carriers, for example, frequently have considerable extra time to work on a farm. Driving a school bus or milk route are other kinds of work that may leave the worker with a good deal of time for farming.

Many industries offer only seasonal work. Some of these have their slack seasons during the time when a person can profitably work on the farm. Coal mining, for instance, normally has its peak season during the winter, so there is considerable time in the summer that is free for farm work. In the wooded areas forestry provides many part-time farmers with work. Some part-time farmers do trapping and fishing in the winter. Some of the agricultural processing plants provide seasonal work and leave the person who is employed in them enough time for profitable part-time farming. For example, a man might raise fruits or vegetables for either the fresh market or the canning factories during the spring and summer and then work in a beet-sugar plant during the fall and early winter.

Part-time farming offers a good opportunity for those who have a small pension or annuity. Those who are partially disabled can plan their farm program at the level permitted by their health and ability. Moreover, for some kinds of disability, outdoor farm work is beneficial.

About one-fourth of all part-time farmers work for other farmers; the other three-fourths do something other than farm work. Part-time farmers find work in nearly all industries, trades, and professions. An idea of the number of part-time farmers and the usual activities in which they engage can be obtained from figures 1 and 2 which show where part-time farmers are found and the principal fields of work in which men who lived on farms and worked at non-farm jobs were employed in 1940.

Manufacturing is the most common off-farm work in all the regions. The people in this group work in many kinds of mills and factories including textile mills, iron and steel mills, sawmills, wood-working and furniture-manufacturing establishments, food-processing plants, and machinery and equipment manufacturing plants.

Retail and wholesale trade gives work to many others. This includes running country stores and filling stations. Many part-time farmers do construction work. Included in this group are many craftsmen, such as carpenters, and many laborers. Of the workers in the transportation industry, many work on the railroads or in railroad repair shops, and many are truck drivers. The principal work in the mining industry is found in coal mines, oil and gas fields and plants, and quarries.

Professional or Government work is often done by part-time farmers. In this group are many school teachers, ministers, veterinarians, and public officials.

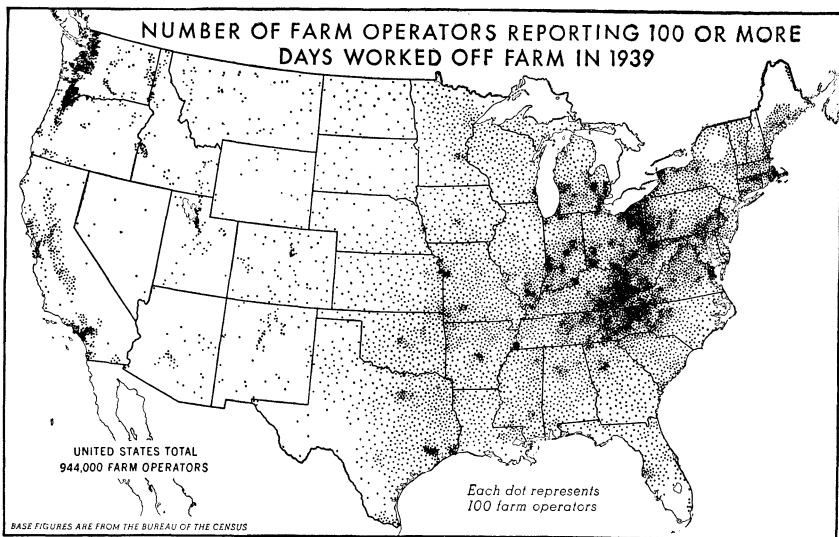


FIGURE 1.—Most of the places that are called part-time farms are shown on this map. Many are concentrated in the industrial and coal-mining areas, and in the vicinity of the larger cities.

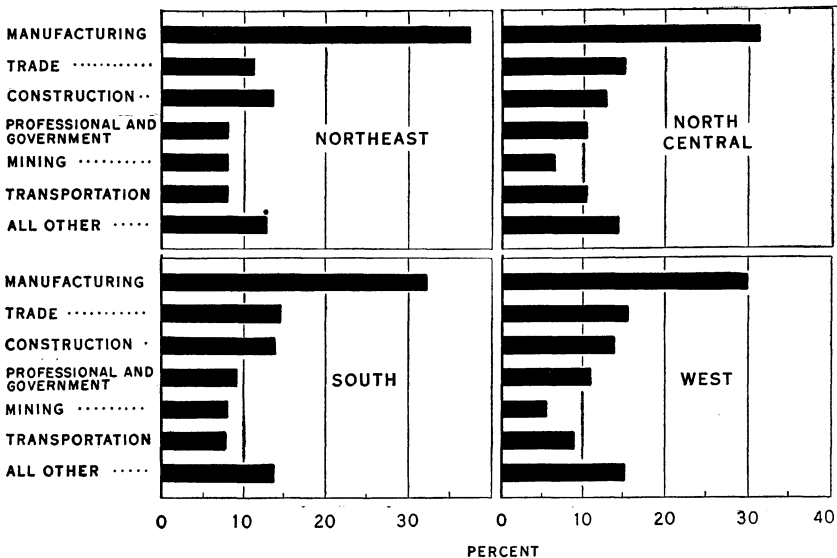


FIGURE 2.—Groups of industries in which part-time farmers work. It is evident that 30 percent or more were employed in manufacturing industries in each region.

### HOW MUCH INCOME CAN BE EXPECTED?

The amount of labor a man and his family are willing to devote to farm work is the chief item that decides the amount of farm income he can expect. This also governs the acreage of land he should get,



the things he should raise, and the amount and kind of equipment he needs. The farm income may be only a couple of hundred dollars a year, and that may not be in cash but rather the equivalent in savings made on the food bill. Or farm income may be anywhere above that figure, perhaps to well over \$1,000 a year.

One advantage of part-time farming is that a man can plan the extent of his farm work to fit his special needs and wishes. If he has a good job and wants to live on a farm because of the advantages farm life offers his family and because he likes to do a little farm work, he will limit his farming activities to fit those conditions. On the other hand, if the work off the farm is seasonal, or occupies only part of each day, and if it provides less income than is desired he may plan to spend a large part of his time in farm work.

### WORK TO BE DONE VARIES WITH EXPECTED INCOME

If a part-time farmer expects his farm to provide only enough vegetables and fruits and perhaps eggs and milk for his own family, not much labor will be needed. Most families have enough spare time during the mornings, evenings, and week ends to care for a garden large enough to meet most of their needs for fruits and vegetables, and to preserve some food, and still have a little time left for recreation.

If a large garden is properly cared for and part of the produce is preserved for winter use, it will add to the income the equivalent of \$100 to \$300 a year, depending on the size of the family. The work that is put on the garden probably will return less per hour than



FIGURE 3.—A well-planned and well-kept garden that will provide an abundant and varied supply of fresh and canned vegetables for a family of average size.

that received from regular employment. If a man tries to include in the cost of the produce the value of his labor at the regular rates paid by his employer, he will probably find that the produce is costing more than if it were bought at the neighborhood grocery. But if he enjoys the work in a garden so much that it is at least partly recreational, if he and his family value the superior quality of freshness which cannot be bought at the market, and if he takes pride in growing a large share of his family's food, he will find garden work very profitable.

If more income is wanted from the farm, more time must be devoted to farm work. But if a man has full-time employment the year round, he cannot expect to expand his farming profitably much beyond production for family use, unless he has children of working age or is willing to give up practically all recreation, or decides to hire help. Generally, part-time farmers hire very little labor.

## DECIDING ON THE PRODUCTS TO BE GROWN

### WHAT SHOULD BE RAISED FOR HOME USE?

When deciding on the crops to be grown, the first to be considered are vegetables and small fruits for family use. One-half to three-fourths of an acre of good land will be enough to supply nearly all the vegetables and small fruits, both summer and winter, for a family of five. A few hand tools, a sprayer, duster, wheel hoe, and perhaps a wheelbarrow are needed for a garden of this size. The annual cash cost of such a garden would be from \$20 to \$40, which includes the cost of having the plot plowed and buying the seeds, fertilizer, and insecticides.

A few fruit trees will make a welcome addition to the home food supply if the trees are well cared for, including pruning, cultivating, fertilizing, and spraying. Spraying requires suitable equipment unless the place is in a locality where the spraying can be hired. About 10 bearing trees of different kinds will supply an abundance of fruit for the average family. Unless the owner intends to take good care of his fruit trees, it is not recommended that they be planted. Some part-time farmers have a wood lot from which they obtain their posts and firewood.

Many part-time farmers may want also to produce their own eggs and milk, and perhaps their own meat. Even with regular employment a man may have enough spare time to care for some chickens or rabbits, possibly a hog and a milk cow or a goat or two, in addition to the garden, *if he really wants to*. It must be remembered that any kind of livestock requires regular care every day of the year. Livestock cannot be neglected. The garden permits more flexibility. If the operator wants to do something else today he may put off garden work until tomorrow and probably not lose much by the delay. But livestock requires that he follow a regular schedule. Departure from the schedule may bring a sharp decline in production or actual loss of the animals. If one is unwilling to tie himself down, or cannot be at home at regular times every day, he had better give up the idea of keeping animals.

About a dozen hens if properly cared for will provide from 90 to 110 dozen eggs a year—enough for a family of five. The hens will



require very little ground, and an adequate poultry house can be built from materials costing from \$50 to \$75 (fig. 4). In addition to kitchen scraps, they will need in a year about 85 pounds of mash and grain per bird, at a cost of about \$2 to \$3 in normal times.

Some part-time farmers keep hogs for butchering. But hogs are not very well suited to small places, and many communities prohibit keeping them in thickly settled areas. Pigs, in any case, should be kept some distance from any residence.

One or two hogs will supply most of the meat and cooking fats for a family of five, and many families would not want this much pork.

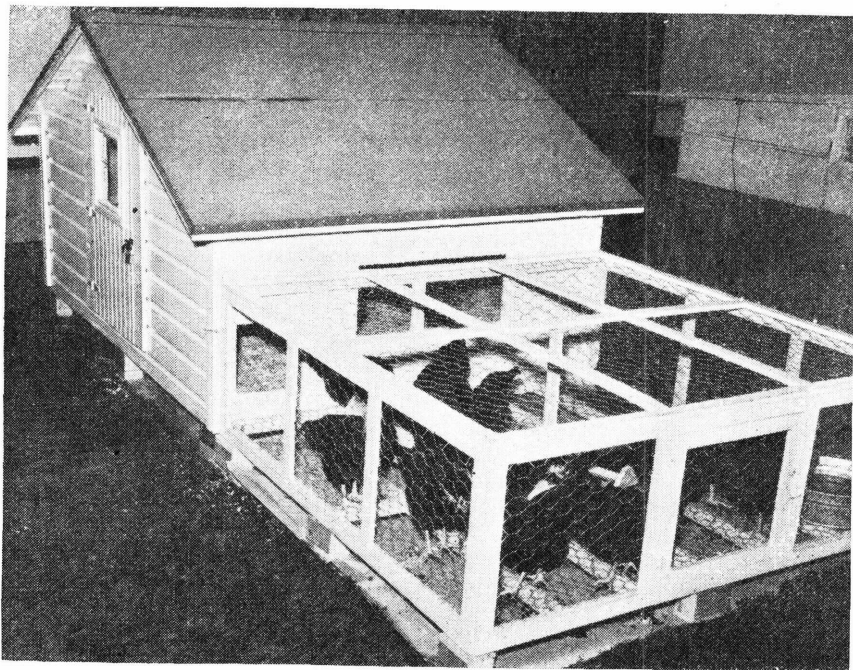


FIGURE 4.—An inexpensive and easily constructed back yard poultry house and run that will accommodate 15 layers producing on the average, 6 or 7 eggs a day.

A couple of weanling pigs bought in the spring will be large enough to butcher in the late fall or early winter. In normal times they can be bought for about \$4 or \$5 each. A small pen, a rude shelter, and a trough, is all the equipment needed. Kitchen scraps can be fed; in addition, from 600 to 1,000 pounds of grain, costing from \$10 to \$20, will be enough to carry a pig from the weanling to slaughter stage. With one-half or even one-fourth of an acre of good pasture, the feed cost could be reduced by as much as 10 or 20 percent.

The advisability of "feeding out" a pig will depend upon the price of pork compared with the price of grain. It is to be remembered that considerable skill and work is required in slaughtering, dressing, and curing the meat. Many a farmer has this work done by a local butcher.

One milk cow will cost from \$75 to \$150. With good care the cow should provide about 2,500 quarts of milk yearly. During about 4 months of the year this would provide a family of five with butter as well as milk, if the family wishes to make butter, and during all but 1 or 2 of the remaining months with plenty of milk.

Keeping a cow will require a pasture of 1 to 2 acres, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tons of hay costing \$25 to \$40, and 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of grain costing from \$15 to \$35. Shelter is needed for the cow, particularly if the farm is in the North. The materials for the shelter will cost from \$50 to \$150.

Milk goats are well adapted to part-time farming. They do not demand as much space or feed as cows. During the winter a doe will require a daily ration of about 2 and 3 pounds of hay and from 1 to 2 pounds of grain. During the summer a little less grain can be fed, perhaps 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds per day, and the doe can be tethered out on any grassy space that is available. Sweet corn stover, beet tops, bean and pea vines, and other byproducts from the garden can be used as feed.

A good doe will produce about 2 quarts of milk a day for 7 to 10 months each year. For a continuous supply of milk, 2 does might be kept and bred about 6 months apart.

Domestic rabbits require only a very little space, simple equipment that is easily constructed at home, and small quantities of feed. Rabbits need a good quality of hay, some green or succulent feed, and a grain ration. A buck and three or four does should produce enough young rabbits to supply as much rabbit meat as would be wanted by a family of five.

Clean and sanitary quarters are needed for rabbits. Hutches should be cleaned daily and disinfected once or twice a week.

#### PRODUCTION FOR MARKET

Thus far, production for family use has been considered. If a man wishes to supplement his income with cash he may grow one or more crops for sale either on the fresh market or for commercial processing. Here again the amount of time he can give to farm work decides the case, but it is also essential that suitable land be available at reasonable cost. The first step in deciding what to produce commercially is to determine not only the amount of family labor available but also the proportion of this labor that is to be devoted to farm work and the way in which it will be distributed throughout the year.

As an aid in estimating the labor supply it might be well to list the months of the year and place opposite each month the estimated amount of time the family will be able and willing to devote to farm work. The farmer should ask himself this question, "How many hours will my wife and the children want to be occupied with farm work each month?" If he has a regular vacation period he may want to include part or all of it as time available for farm work. But it will be wise not to include all of the family's free time—only that which they are really willing to use for farm work. These estimates will give a picture of the time available for work on the farm. The next task is to select from the crops that are adapted to the locality the ones that will fit the time available for farm work.

The approximate amount of labor required by months for some of the common part-time farming enterprises is shown in table 1.

TABLE 1.—*Approximate amount of labor required for selected enterprises on a small scale, by months*<sup>1</sup>

Months	Enterprise, and labor required						
	Well-diversified garden (1 acre) <sup>2</sup>	Field corn (10 acres) <sup>3</sup>	Hay (10 acres)	1 milk cow <sup>4</sup>	25 to 50 laying hens	Raising 3 pigs	40 to 60 colonies of bees
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
January				20	12		
February				20	12		
March	45	30		20	12		
April	109	40		20	12	12	20
May	109	70		20	12	12	10
June	45	50	80	20	12	12	15
July	30	15	10	10	12	12	20
August	35			10	12	12	80
September	30	60	70	25	12	12	20
October	30	130	40	20	12		60
November		65		20	12		
December		20		20	12		
Total	415	480	200	225	144	72	225

<sup>1</sup> This is approximately the seasonal distribution of labor in the East Central part of the United States; the work on crops would be done earlier in the South and later in the North.

<sup>2</sup> Land prepared with horse or tractor power.

<sup>3</sup> Corn cut and shocked and husked by hand.

<sup>4</sup> The low labor requirement when the cow is dry, and the peak when she freshens, might occur in any other month if the time of freshening is shifted.

#### DECIDING WHAT CROPS TO RAISE FOR SALE

**CROPS ADAPTED TO THE LOCALITY.**—First, one must learn what crops are adapted to the locality and to the particular soils on the farm. Unless a man is familiar with these crops he should consult an experienced local farmer, his county agricultural agent, the vocational agriculture teacher, or the agricultural college of the State. This is especially important if it is planned to raise crops that ordinarily are not grown commercially in the area. Many crops that are sufficiently adapted to justify raising them for family use do not do well enough for commercial production.

**CROPS FOR WHICH A MARKET OR MARKETING FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE.**—It is not enough to be able to grow a crop—the crop will have to be sold to someone, so there must be a nearby market or marketing facilities. There are three possible outlets—local fresh markets, packers and distributors, and processing plants. The first type of market pays the highest prices, but more of the grower's time will be required in marketing, and the losses from spoilage may be higher. The packers and distributors pay less but provide a fairly steady and reliable market, and selling to them does not take much time. Sometimes they buy the crop in the field and harvest it. The processing plants pay least but by selling to them one is sure of a market, and many of them contract for the total crop at planting time, provide technical guidance, and make loans to cover the costs of seed and labor. How good these three market outlets are depends upon the locality and the kind of produce. Fresh markets in towns and the smaller cities can easily be oversupplied. Packers and processing plants are not available in all localities, and frequently a plant will handle only one or two crops.

**CROPS THAT REQUIRE CARE WHEN THE OPERATOR CAN GIVE IT.**—The final choice among the crops that are adapted to a locality and for which there are markets or marketing facilities will be based on



the comparison between the labor they require and the labor the operator can give to them.

If growing and marketing conditions permit, it is generally advisable to raise a smaller quantity of several crops rather than to grow only one. A variety of crops will utilize labor better, for the time when the most cultivation and harvesting is needed usually varies with different crops. If one crop fails there may still be income from the others. The matter should be considered very carefully, however,

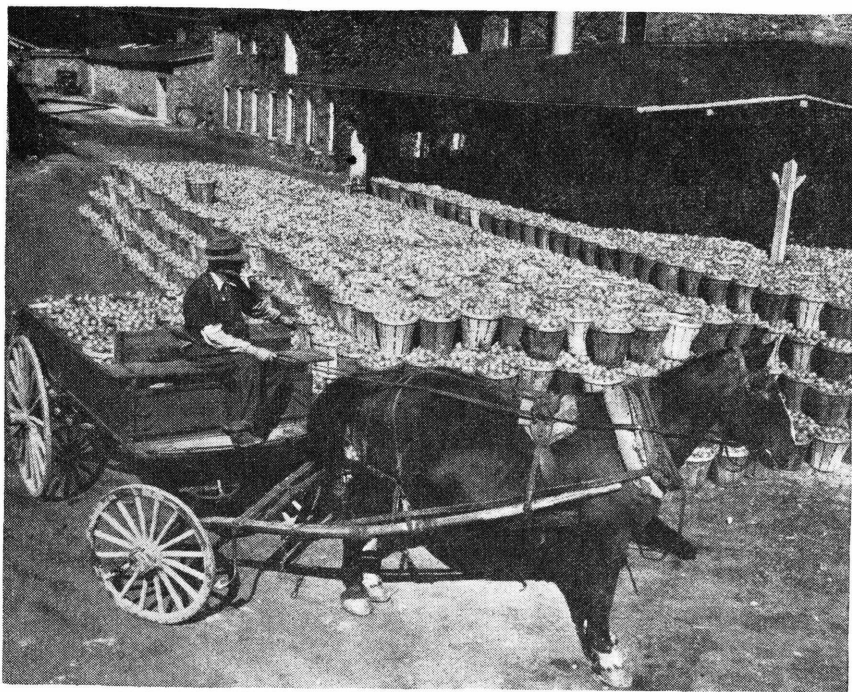


FIGURE 5.—If a processing plant is available, products can be marketed readily without taking much time.

before any crop is added that will require special machinery or buildings that are not needed for the other crops.

Growing vegetables, fruits, nuts, and berries for the market fits in well with part-time farming. The yields and returns per acre are high and on small places much of the work can be done by members of the family. But the tree fruits and nuts have some disadvantages for a part-time farmer. Production is hazardous and complete crop failure is not unusual. Cash costs of care are higher than for most other crops. Unless the place is in an area where much of the work can be hired on a custom basis, the cost of the required spraying and the cost of other machinery may be prohibitive for the part-time farmer.

#### WHAT MACHINERY AND POWER IS NEEDED?

Equipment and power required will depend, of course, on what is raised, the number of acres, and the possibility of having some work

done on a contract basis. Production for home use is about as much as one can expect to do with hand tools and even then he will probably want to hire the land plowed. For a larger acreage of crops some kind of power will be needed for plowing, harrowing, disking, and cultivating. If a man has 5 or 10 acres he may want to buy a small 2-wheel garden tractor. These can be bought, new, at about \$100 up to \$500. Because of their light weight they are not entirely satisfactory for plowing and, especially on the heavier soils, it may still be necessary to hire the plowing done. A horse could be bought for less money, but it will take 3 or 4 acres of cropland to grow the feed needed for a horse. It is not economical to keep a horse unless the



FIGURE 6.—Another way in which produce can be marketed is to sell it at a city market. Farmers generally get a higher price at these markets than is paid by the processors, and a variety of products can be sold at one time, but more time is spent in marketing, and the losses from spoilage are greater.

farm contains at least 15 or 20 acres of good cropland. Occasionally a part-time farmer can use his horse in work off the farm for pay, in which case it might be profitable for him to keep a horse on a small acreage.

In considering the other machinery needed, it is to be remembered that in addition to the plows, harrows, wagons, etc., that are used on all crops, there are groups of crops that are handled with a certain line of machinery. Most of the row crops can be planted and cultivated with one planter and one cultivator. The hay crops require a mower, a rake, and perhaps a stacker. The grain crops require a drill and a binder or a "combine." If the farm is equipped to handle one of these



groups of crops a man can add other crops that belong to the same group without buying much more machinery, but if he undertakes some crop from a different group he may need considerably more equipment.

The difficulty of providing power and machinery at low cost is one of the disadvantages of small farms. With each machine, as the number of acres handled goes down, the per acre cost of the machinery goes up.

A part-time farmer must be very careful to avoid investing too much in farm machinery. He should find out if he can hire some of the work that requires expensive and specialized machinery, such as spray rigs, combines, or binders. As most of his equipment will be used only a few days each year, he does not need the most up-to-date models and can keep his investment down by buying good second-hand machinery.

#### PRODUCTION OF FOREST PRODUCTS

In many localities much of the land is now wooded and the soil is better adapted to forest products than to crops. In such areas production of forest products, either alone or in combination with other enterprises, may offer a good chance for part-time farming. The products would probably vary with the locality. For the country as a whole, the principal products from the farm woods, in order of their value, are fuel wood, sawlogs, veneer logs, posts, pulpwood, cross ties, and poles and piling. Other products that are important in some localities include Christmas trees and greens, nuts and berries, turpentine, maple sirup and sugar, hemlock and chestnut bark for tanning, cascara bark, rhododendron, azalea, laurel, and other wild shrubs.

One interested in producing forest products should consider the kind and extent of the woodland available, noting the products that might be obtained and the varieties and condition of the trees. After carefully considering the desirability of the area for forestry purposes and the markets available to him, he will be in a position to determine the extent to which it will pay him to devote his time to forestry and the types of enterprise that are most suitable. A new wood lot should be established only after careful consideration, as it will be several years before it will bring a return. Many of the products are usually obtained from wild plants or trees and at normal prices do not justify planting and cultivating.

In addition to putting to a profitable use land that is hilly, rocky, or of low productivity, the forest enterprise has other features, especially attractive to the part-time farmer. The time of performing the principal operations can often be adjusted to fit in with periods when his off-farm work does not keep him very busy. It is possible to postpone the harvesting of pulpwood, sawlogs, or veneer logs for several years without loss since the trees will continue to grow and the ultimate harvest will be so much the larger. Woods can be treated something like a savings account that accumulates with the years without requiring much attention, and can be drawn upon in time of need.

The amount of work required by the forestry enterprise will vary a great deal. As a general rule, farm woodlands can be more intensively managed than the average forest. If trees are to be planted

considerable time will be required for this alone. The principal operations required by most established farm forests will be improvement cutting, thinning, and harvesting. This work can be done with the tools found on most any part-time farm. A team or tractor would be needed in harvesting such products as fuel wood, posts, and logs. Unless the part-time farmer has a rather large truck, he may find it advisable to hire the hauling of logs and pulpwood from the farm to market. He may also decide to hire some of the woods work done. He may sell stumpage, asking for bids on the trees that are to be harvested and letting the buyer do the cutting and hauling. Naturally, the income he will receive per 1,000 board feet will be lower than it would be if he did the work himself. Generally the farmer who does the work himself receives a good return for his labor.

#### WHAT LIVESTOCK CAN BE RAISED?

Taking good care of livestock is highly skilled work. It requires considerable knowledge and proficiency. Livestock need suitable buildings and equipment and, even with these, the production risks are greater than with crops. If a disease starts in a flock of chickens or among other livestock the owner may lose his entire investment amounting to several hundred dollars.

**POULTRY.**—Chickens lend themselves well to part-time farming. Good returns may be had from a small space. The cost of the flock, the buildings, and the equipment is not high in relation to the returns. The birds respond well to good care and there are facilities almost everywhere for marketing eggs as well as live or dressed chickens. The net returns to be expected from chickens will vary with the cost of feed, the care given them, and the price received. If prices for eggs are unfavorable, some of the hens can be sold or used on the table, and the enterprise can be built up again when conditions are more favorable.

**COWS, HOGS, AND SHEEP.**—These animals are not so well adapted to commercial production on very small part-time farms but may offer attractive possibilities on larger farms. All require a fairly large investment. Milk cows and sheep require considerable acreage, as it is usually not economical to buy roughage. Good milk cows need rather elaborate buildings and equipment for themselves and for handling the milk, particularly if milk is sold, for it is usually necessary to meet strict sanitary specifications. Sometimes these require that the milk house be separate from the stable. Cheap land suitable for pasture is necessary for low-cost production. Those who want to raise these animals should plan to devote a considerable part of their time to farming.

**MILK GOATS.**—Milk goats are well adapted to part-time farming because they do not need as much space, pasture, or feed as cows. They give milk for the family, but in many localities it is difficult to find a satisfactory market for goat's milk.

**RABBITS.**—On some part-time farms rabbits are kept for income which may come from the sale of furs, breeding stock, and meat. Beginning with two or three does and a buck, the size of the enterprise can be built up quickly by saving a part of the natural increase. Anyone who intends to get income from a rabbit enterprise should be

thoroughly familiar with the raising of rabbits and know what the market opportunities are for his product.

#### SHALL GRAIN FEED FOR LIVESTOCK BE BOUGHT OR RAISED?

Part-time farmers generally find it more profitable to buy a large part of their grain feed. This is especially true of those on small places or on high-priced land near cities. Raising feed takes a good deal of land and is adapted to mechanized farming. Generally speaking, part-time farmers find it more profitable to raise more chickens or other livestock than to spend their time raising feed for a smaller flock. Each part-time farmer should work out the answer to this question in the light of all the facts in his own case, particularly the amount and quality of land available to him and the price at which feed can be bought.

#### MISCELLANEOUS ENTERPRISES

**BEES.**—Part-time farmers frequently keep bees. Successful beekeeping requires considerable skill and a good deal of attention. Bees do not require attention every day, but beekeeping should not be combined with an occupation that does not permit proper care of the bees at times when they need attention. Work with bees is not evenly distributed throughout the year, considerable time being needed in the fall when the honey is harvested and the bees are made ready for the winter. Some attention is also required through the spring and summer.

Beekeeping can be started with a small investment and only a few colonies, and can be built up as the operator gains experience.

**UNUSUAL ENTERPRISES.**—There are several rather specialized enterprises that are occasionally followed by part-time farmers. The fact that they are uncommon should be a warning that they involve special problems that have kept all but a few producers out of the business. It may be that the market is very limited, as with animals for scientific experiments like guinea pigs and white rats. Or the enterprise may require considerable capital, as with mushrooms and foxes. Risks from disease are high in several of these enterprises. Among the unusual enterprises the following might be listed: raising muskrats, frogs, goldfish, and squabs, the growing of ginseng and other herbs, and the raising of flowers and bulbs.

In nearly all of these enterprises, the successful people have been those who have demonstrated unusual skill and understanding of the business. A favorable location with respect to climate and markets is usually important. These enterprises should be undertaken only after careful study has been given to all of the facts involved.

#### HOW MUCH LAND IS NEEDED FOR A PART-TIME FARM?

The acreage required for a part-time farm depends on the extent of the farming to be done and the fertility of the soil. If one plans to raise only fruits and vegetables for his own use,  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre to 1 acre of good land should be enough. A small flock of chickens can also be kept on a plot of this size if the feed for them is not to be raised at

home. Table 2 will serve as a guide in deciding on the land needed to grow feed for livestock.

TABLE 2.—*Approximate acreage of good land required to produce feed for livestock, by type and numbers of livestock*<sup>1</sup>

Number and type of livestock	Pasture	Hay	Grain	Total
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>
25 hens and 40 young chickens.....			1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
1 cow.....	1	1	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	2 $\frac{3}{4}$
3 pigs (for 6 months).....	1		1	2
1 horse.....	1	1	1	3

<sup>1</sup> Estimates for hay are based on a yield of about 2 tons per acre. Estimates for grain are based on a yield equivalent to 40 bushels of corn per acre.

### WHERE SHOULD A PART-TIME FARM BE LOCATED?

Before selecting a particular farm it is important to consider the suitability of the general area for part-time farming. The following points should be taken into account.

**NEAR OTHER WORK OPPORTUNITIES.**—Many people have been disappointed in part-time farming because they settled in communities where there was not enough work to be had off their farms, or not enough of the kind that fits in with their farming programs. This is a primary consideration.

**NEARBY MARKETS.**—A farm should be selected that is near good markets if anything is to be produced for sale. Those who plan to sell fresh vegetables or whole milk, for example, should be close to a city or town.

**ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.**—Transportation is of vital importance to the part-time farmer. Time spent in travel to and from other work and to and from the market, will be taken from farm work. Moreover, it will cost money to do this travel. If the farm is too far from the other work the cost of transportation may be so high as to offset the earnings from the farm. A part-time farm should be on an all-weather road.

### SELECTING THE PART-TIME FARM

Having found a suitable area for part-time farming, the exact farm should be selected with great care. It is to be the home for the family as well as a source of income. But as it will not be the only source of income every precaution should be taken to see that running the farm will not interfere with other work. Here are a few things to consider before selecting a part-time farm.

**SIZE.**—Is the farm large enough to bring in the amount of income you expect and not too large for you and your family to operate along with your other work?

**ADAPTATION TO YOUR USE.**—Is the soil fertile and adapted to the things you plan to raise? You should get expert advice on this point because many crops are exceedingly particular about their environment. The soil type, drainage, or slope may be responsible for the difference between profitable production and poor crops. Frequently, small areas that are not adapted to a certain crop may be next to areas that are well suited to that crop. Land speculators have made

fortunes selling unadapted land to hopeful farmers. The county agricultural agent or other local disinterested specialist can help you to make the right selection.

**FACILITIES.**—Are water and other facilities available? The part-time farm probably will be outside the town. Water mains, sewers, gas lines, and perhaps even electric lines may not be right at the door. Getting these facilities may involve large and unexpected expenditures. It may be necessary for the buyer to provide these facilities himself at great expense or to get along without some of them.

**NEIGHBORHOOD.**—Is the vicinity one in which the family would like to live? Are the houses nearby attractive and well kept? There are rural as well as urban slums. Property in most rural areas is seldom protected by zoning ordinances such as cities have. It is possible for someone to locate a tavern, filling station, junk yard, rendering plant, or some other business near enough to the new home to depreciate its value.

**REASONABLY PRICED.**—If a man is buying a farm, it is very important that he pay only what it is worth. Because its value will depend partly on what he can raise on it, and partly on its value as a place to live, he can expect it to cost more per acre than the going value of farm land of similar quality that is farther from town. First, he should decide what a place is worth to him and his family as a home in comparison with what it would cost him to live in town. But he must be sure to take into account the differences between city and county taxes, insurance, and utility rates, on the one hand, and the added cost of travel to work on the other. In many areas the schools in the country are not so good as those in the city. Facilities like fire protection, gas, and sewage systems may not be available. These things must be considered when placing a value on the country residence.

What amount a family should pay over and above the value of a place as a home will depend upon the earnings expected from it as a farm. One way of estimating the value would be to set up a plan for operating the farm, listing the kinds and quantities of the different things that it could be expected to produce in an average year both for home use and for sale, and then estimate the value of these at normal prices. The total of this will be the probable gross income from farming. Subtract the total of the estimated annual farming expenditures, including an allowance for depreciation of buildings and equipment, and a charge for the owner's labor and that of his family. (It may be difficult to decide what this time is worth, but charge something for it or too much will be paid for the farm, and the owner will get nothing for his labor.) The difference that is left after subtracting all expenses, is net farm income. Now capitalize this at about 5 percent and the result will be the approximate value of the farm.

Thus, if the net farm income is \$100, the farm value will be approximately \$2,000—that is \$100 divided by .05. In other words, if a man invests \$2,000 in such a farm he can expect a return of \$100 a year, or about 5 percent on his money. Add the *farm* value, arrived at in this way to the *home* value, to get the total value of the part-time farm.

Use of a work sheet like the one shown below is helpful in setting down the figures and making calculations.

If a man is not well acquainted with the area or is not experienced enough in farming to make a calculation of this sort, he had better rent a place for a year or so before buying.



## WORK SHEET FOR ESTIMATING VALUE OF A PART-TIME FARM

## 1. Income from farm production for sale and home use:

<i>Crop or livestock</i>	<i>Units produced<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Price per unit</i>	<i>Total value</i>
-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----
Total income-----			\$-----

## 2. Expenses of farm production:

Hired labor	-----	Equipment repairs and replacements	-----
Seed	-----	Livestock replacements	-----
Feed	-----	Building repairs and replacements <sup>2</sup>	-----
Fertilizer	-----	Taxes and insurance <sup>2</sup>	-----
Water	-----	Depreciation <sup>2</sup>	-----
Fuel	-----	Miscellaneous	-----
Total farm expenses		-----	\$-----

## 3. Returns minus expenses

\$-----

## 4. Value of own and family labor @ ----- per hour

-----

## 5. Returns on farming investment (3)—(4)

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## 6. Value of property for farming @ ----- %

-----

## 7. Value of property as a home

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## 8. Total value of property

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<sup>1</sup> Do not include crops that are to be fed to livestock.<sup>2</sup> Include only that part of these items that you estimate should be charged against farming activities.

## DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE A PART-TIME FARMER?

The decision to become a part-time farmer is a serious one. Unless a man has farmed before, he must adopt a new way of living. If he makes the wrong decision he will be unhappy, his work will be drudgery, and his returns probably will be below expectation, for plants and animals thrive best under enthusiastic and watchful care. It will be costly to reverse the decision once a farm is bought. Before making it, any family should carefully weigh the advantages against the disadvantages.

## DISADVANTAGES OF PART-TIME FARMING

**IT IS CONFINING.**—Farming, if livestock is raised, will require the presence of someone on the farm every day. Even without livestock the farm cannot be left for long periods, especially during the growing season. Moreover, farming requires a regular routine; the owner cannot do as he wishes on the spur of the moment. His life must be arranged to meet the requirements of the crops and livestock. He must get up early and frequently must work rather late at night. Even a slight change of the work schedule may cut the production of the cow or chickens.

**IT TAKES HARD PHYSICAL LABOR.**—The work will take many hours of labor, frequently under unpleasant conditions—hot sun and cold rain. Regardless of how well the work is planned, bad weather or unexpected setbacks will mean extra work to catch up.

**COSTS OF PRODUCTION WILL BE HIGH.**—Land near cities is higher in price than land of equal farm value farther from town. Part-time farmers generally cannot buy supplies at the lower prices at which they can be obtained by those who buy in large quantities. It may not

be profitable for a part-time farmer to own labor-saving machines. It will take unusual skill to get as high egg production per hen or as much milk per cow as can be obtained by a competent full-time farmer.

**THERE MAY BE DISAPPOINTMENTS.**—Production may fall far below expectations. Drought, hail, disease, and insects take their toll of crops. Sickness or loss of some of the livestock may cut deeply into the owner's capital as well as reduce his earnings.

**JOBS CAN'T BE CHANGED FREELY.**—A man who is running a part-time farm will have many ties to hold him where he is. To leave may mean a considerable loss of capital because it involves much more than loading the family's household goods on a moving van. Therefore he may not be able to change his regular job as freely as he might wish.

**FARMING MAY BE AN ADDITIONAL BURDEN IF THE MAIN JOB IS LOST.**—Contrary to the usual idea, part-time farming actually may be an additional burden if the main job is lost, especially if the farm is owned or is being bought. The chances to sell part-time farms are likely to rise and fall with the chances for off-the-farm work in the same area. Producing enough to eat is not producing enough for security. The rent must be paid if the farm is rented. Unless the place is free of mortgage, the interest must be paid and principal payments, as well as taxes must be met. When a man farms only to supplement his main income his continuation in farming will probably depend largely on the income he makes in his main employment.

#### ADVANTAGES OF PART-TIME FARMING

**ENVIRONMENT.**—A farm provides a wholesome and healthful environment in which to rear children. They have room to play and plenty of fresh air. They can be given chores that are adapted to their age and ability. Owning or caring for a calf, a pig, or some chickens develops in children a sense of responsibility for work. Fresh vegetables, fruits, and dairy products in abundance and with a flavor unknown to those who get them from the market are among the rewards of those who live on a farm.

**SECURITY.**—Part-time farming will give a measure of security if the regular job is lost *provided* the farm is owned free of debt and furnishes enough income to meet fixed expenses and minimum living costs.

**WORK DURING RETIREMENT YEARS.**—Part-time farming is especially desirable for the elderly or partially disabled or for those whose health requires some outside work or exercise. The income from the farm supplements their insurance, annuity, or social security benefits, and the amount of the work can be adjusted to their physical abilities.

**PROFITABLE USE OF SPARE TIME.**—Part-time farming gives a chance to use profitably any family labor which otherwise would not be utilized. It can provide work for the entire family, subject to the planning and under the supervision of the family itself.

**LOWER LIVING COSTS.**—Generally, a family can live more cheaply in the country than in the city, without lowering the level of living.

**RECREATIONAL VALUES.**—The physical work on a farm is often considered recreational. It is a welcome change from regular employment and a physical conditioner for many white-collar workers.

**THE PLEASURE OF FARM WORK AND LIFE.**—Many people like farm life and farm work. To have a little farm of their own is the frequently expressed ambition of many city people.

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WITH THE FAMILY

Part-time farming is not just a way to make a little money. It is a way of living and a cooperative venture for the entire family. The prospective part-time farmer and his family had better consider together the following questions before deciding to engage in part-time farming:

1. Do we really want to live in the country?
2. How will part-time farming change our way of living and are we willing to make the changes?

3. Do we want to accept the routine of farm life?

If the family clearly understands the requirements of part-time farming and is willing to accept the advantages and disadvantages involved in this way of living, they probably will be happy and successful in it.

#### USEFUL BULLETINS FOR THE PART-TIME FARMER

- F. B. 1733. Planning a Subsistence Homestead.
- F. B. 1673. The Farm Garden.
- F. B. 1939. Home Storage of Vegetables and Fruits.
- F. B. 1746. Subsistence Farm Gardens. (For sale only. 10¢.)
- F. B. 1800. Home-made Jellies, Jams, and Preserves.
- F. B. 1508. Poultry Keeping in Back Yards.
- F. B. 1652. Diseases and Parasites of Poultry.
- F. B. 1610. Dairy Farming for Beginners.
- F. B. 920. Milk Goats.
- F. B. 1753. Livestock for Small Farms.
- F. B. 1123. Growing and Planting Hardwood Seedlings on the Farm.
- F. B. 1177. Care and Improvement of the Farm Woods.
- F. B. 1117. Forestry and Farm Income.
- F. B. 1907. Equipment and Methods for Harvesting Farm Woodland Products.
- F. B. 1693. Growing Christmas Holly on the Farm.
- F. B. 1961. Getting Started in Farming.
- F. B. 1965. Planning the Farm for Profit and Stability.
- F. B. 1962. Useful Records for Family Farms.
- D. S. 21. Getting Established on the Land.
- F. C. A. Cir. 30. Mortgage Loans on Part-Time or Full-Time Farms.